

CIRCULAR

OF

THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS

OF THE

INSTITUTION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE

DEAF AND DUMB.

AND THE

PETITION

TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COMMONALTY
OF THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

WITH THEIR

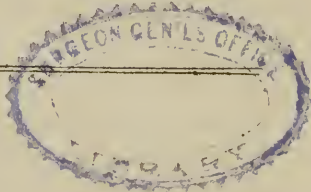
Favorable Report and Patronage, &c.

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THE NEW-YORK INSTITUTION
FOR THE
INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB,
July 16, 1818.

SILVANUS MILLER, Esq. *in behalf of the Committee appointed for that purpose, reported a CIRCULAR, addressed to the Citizens—whereupon an order was passed, that the same be accepted and published.*

CIRCULAR.

SIR,

THE directors of “ The New-York Institution for the Instruction of the DEAF and DUMB,” are impelled by a sense of duty, and a desire to promote the welfare of those unfortunate persons committed to their superintending care, to make this appeal to a charitable and benevolent public. To their charge are intrusted some of the most interesting, innocent, and helpless children of the human family. Deprived of the sense of hearing, and the power of speech, they possess all those sensibilities and affections—all those feelings and sympathies, which adorn, delight and dignify society. Without the fostering care of benevolent instruction, and the steady and kind supervision of endearing friends, these must languish in ignorance, remain the monuments of negligence, of inattention, and oftentimes, of wretchedness. The period of instruction to man, as far as the elementary principles of learning are concerned, is limited to the same number of years, whether the pupils are favored by providence with, or are deprived of the full power of utterance

and locution. The age, therefore, to instil into the minds of the "*Deaf and Dumb*," those principles and ideas, which elevate man, should not be permitted to attain that period, when exertion and instruction would be useless and unprofitable. They must be taught in early life—their tender minds must be nurtured, and improved by more than *parental* attention, solicitude, and care.

It is but a few years since the benevolence of man has been applied with active ingenuity, in forming systems of instruction for these unfortunate members of society; and the first essays were considered, as an experiment, of doubtful issue.

But experience soon demonstrated the charming consequences of the benign undertakings, and the mind of man, deprived of what was considered essential to its successful improvement, developed resources and powers, which at once delighted and astonished the most sanguine. It was discovered, that the privation of speech and of hearing, did not, in any sensible degree, impair the elastic qualities of the human intellect; and the advancement of the pupils gave the most cheering evidences, that in their instruction, their preceptors and patrons, were to be rewarded by the most satisfactory results.

Institutions for the instruction of the "*Deaf and Dumb*," were multiplied, and their success has been commensurate with the exertions and labor bestowed upon a subject of such deep, and vital importance. The establishments of institutions of this character, in our country, are of recent date; and their nature and usefulness may not have been duly appreciated by enlightened America—but desirous at all times to better the condition of man, and emulous to further those objects

which are so intimately connected with *desirable* existence; in imitation of those philanthropists who have manifested so much anxiety, and have been remunerated by so much success, in their application to these objects; the institution over which we are the directors, was founded in the humble, but anxious hope, that with the aid of the charitable, and under the dispensation of an over-ruling providence, it would become instrumental in restoring to usefulness, and rational enjoyment, those who have been visited by (what has been deemed) the most serious calamities. In the prosecution of their arduous duties, and to give the most extensive usefulness to their institution, they rely, with well-grounded confidence, upon the liberal countenance and munificent disposition of their fellow citizens;—to a discerning and charitable public, they apply, for a “portion of the good things of this life,” whereby, they may be the better enabled, to accomplish the laudable purposes of instructing the *Deaf and Dumb*.

To those who have never witnessed the progress of improvement in the minds of such as are deprived of the sense of hearing, and the organs, or power of speech, there may appear to be insurmountable difficulties; indeed, without witnessing their progress, or examining profoundly the facts, the attempt and system appear paradoxical. But for our encouragement—reality and example are before us.

To give permanent and extensive effect to our warmest wishes, and most anxious pursuits, we ask with earnest solicitation, the patronage of a discerning and benevolent people. In an establishment recently formed, under circumstances well calculated to advance the objects of humanity, in its most interesting, as well as most innocent character, it is fondly hoped.

that there will be felt a strong, and general disposition to further the great objects of improvement to such as are placed under their charge, and thus enable those “afflicted” children, to become useful as well as ornamental—to be the monuments of benevolence, the evidences of the liberality and patronage, of our beloved countrymen.

In the institutions organized for the instruction of “the *Deaf and Dumb*,” there appear to have been two systems adopted: and as in all other discoveries of a recent date, some difference of opinion exists as to the just preference—a limited and temporary experience, seems to yield to the method of communication by sounds as well as tokens.

The directors of “The New-York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb,” have engaged a preceptor of acknowledged abilities, of kind and affable demeanor, whose assiduous attention will be devoted to the immediate instruction of pupils put under his charge. The directors feel great confidence in his qualifications and fitness, and anticipate reasonable success, in the education of such as are placed under his supervision and instruction.

It is the design of the directors of this institution, to combine all that is practicable in the method of teaching their pupils; to unite, as far as is possible, the *single*, with the *two handed alphabet*.

The celebrated Watson, who teaches a school of the “*Deaf and Dumb*” near London, is considered as the most able preceptor of the present age; and his system will be adopted in the government of the “New-York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb.”

The pupils will be instructed in sensible objects, by means of pictures, or representations of nature, familiar to their view; and, as they advance, in the know-

ledge of the connexion, and signification of letters, to their uses in spelling and reading, and the power of arithmetical numbers, combinations, and actual calculation.

By means of this knowledge, they will be enabled to read print and manuscript, and to perform with accuracy and expedition, the various duties of book-keeping, and to do all that is required in the general course of business.

A child having acquired the preceding attainments, can, with great facility, and will, with more than *ordinary correctness*, communicate the objects of errands and messages, on a common slate, provided for the purpose, return answers, make bargains, receive and pay money, and generally perform, all that is required of a *youthful agent*.

By a natural, and usual progress of young minds, they become capable of acquiring abstract ideas, and the principles of ethics. Their condition and improvement soon enable them to know, that they owe great duties to their God and society, and to comprehend also, that they are accountable, as well as rational creatures.

Having acquired the necessary information, and arrived at the customary age, they may be apprenticed, or employed in any of the useful arts of mechanical, agricultural, or other pursuits, where the senses of touch and sight are particularly necessary—they may acquire the knowledge of sculpture, painting and drawing, and the highest attainments in the graphic art—the trades of a sail-maker, taylor, printer, and cordwainer, &c. as well as those of a farmer, gardener, or other useful and respectable occupations.

In cases where the scholar shews the power of using or improving the vocal organs, and where his friends

desire it, he will be instructed in obtaining the power and influence, of articulation and speech.

It will readily be perceived, that it is not possible at this time, to go into a more full developement of the manner of instruction, and the reasons of its preference and adoption—but actuated by a strong desire to be useful in their undertakings, the directors have deemed it their duty to apply to a liberal-minded people, for aid, in the furtherance of an object of such concern and importance.

The people of these United States, are characterised by generous, noble and benevolent feelings; and it may therefore be anticipated, that a liberal disposition will be manifested in the support of an institution, the benefits and utility of which, cannot be too highly appreciated.

While the virtuous efforts of the nation are actively employed in the amelioration of the condition of man, in his religious and moral obligations, and an expanded liberality is still visibly extending itself to a great variety of praiseworthy objects, we call the attention and solicit patronage, to a subject inferior to none in interest and usefulness.

Our little, unfortunate *innocents*, “*sons and daughters of affliction* ;” who have never assailed the ears of the public with their forlorn condition, now appeal to their elevated charity—and it is devoutly hoped, that their interesting calls, will excite the commiseration, and find access to the best feelings, and the most tender considerations, which infold the hearts of man !

With the means afforded by their benefactors, they will be instructed to appreciate the magnitude of their obligations; to pour out their blessings on those, who, in the plenitude of goodness, enabled them to improve

those useful faculties, and cultivate those intellectual endowments, which emanate from “ *the great source of light and love !*”

The donations bestowed for the benefit of the *Deaf and Dumb*, will be disbursed with economy and care. The “ expressive silence,” but “ imploring hands” of “ little children,” appeal with fervent hope and anxious expectation, to the favor of a charitable world ! Without their timely and efficient interposition, they must be doomed to draw out the “ *measure of their days,*” in wretchedness and ignorance ! destined to prolong a life of misery and sorrow, without the power of enjoyment, or the possession of those exalted acquirements and faculties which endear us to life, and distinguish the human, as superior to the brute creation !

In such an appeal, we cannot implore without success : for such purposes, the best wishes and ardent prayers of the good will ascend to heaven, to succour distress, and relieve the miseries of the innocent, and the cries of the helpless !

BY ORDER OF THE DIRECTORS,

SAML. L. MITCHILL, *President.*

JOHN B. SCOTT, *Secretary.*

PETITION.

TO THE HONORABLE

Corporation of the City of New-York.

GENTLEMEN,

In an age like the present, distinguished for so many public charities, it is a matter of surprise, that the melancholy condition of the *Deaf and Dumb* amongst us, has not excited an earlier attention.

In many cities of Europe, the tender feelings of humanity have long been alive to this subject—ample resources have been opened, and every effort has been employed to rescue those unhappy persons from *idleness, ignorance and wretchedness*.

To you, gentlemen, it is unnecessary to trace the progress of those institutions of mercy, from the first partial theories published nearly a century ago.—Through the happy and successful experiments of Father *Vamin*, Mons. *Perrase*, Mr. *Hanick*, Mr. *Baka*, Mr. *Braidwood*, the Abbess *De L'Epee* and *Sicard*, Dr. *Watson* and many others—most of their plans of instruction have been published on this interesting subject, particularly two volumes by the latter gentleman, Dr. *Watson*, of London; and, no doubt, you are sufficiently acquainted with their value. In this city, the London of America, the most distinguished for charitable societies of any part of the United States, an *institution has been lately formed and incorporated by our Legislature, for the instruction of the Deaf and Dumb*; already above *threescore* of those unhappy objects have come within the knowledge of the persons who now address you; and it is confidently believed,

that more than *one hundred* of those innocent sufferers are within the bounds of this city, under the protection of your honorable board.

Gentlemen, we would appeal to your understandings and judgments, when we say that a more noble and praise-worthy institution never claimed your attention. We are called by the imperious voice of public example, by the best feelings of humanity, and by the providence of God, who points out the plan—*virtually to open the ears of the Deaf*, and in *reality to loose the tongues of the Dumb*. “If that man who causes but two blades of grass to grow where only one vegetated before, renders more essential service to mankind than many politicians,” how much more blessed those who are instrumental of cultivating the human mind, and especially under such painful and obstinate circumstances as the persons for whom we plead, of not only rendering them happy in themselves, as social beings and useful members of society, but teaching them the knowledge of their God and the way to heaven, in the light of divine revelation.

The subscription books of the Society have been circulated and are still open, but the sums collected are far, very far short, of the object contemplated. The directors of the institution look up to you with confidence for immediate and liberal assistance—(their school is *now* in operation). They do not presume to dictate in what manner you shall help them: but they are persuaded you will act worthy of yourselves, and will do justice to a subject in which the honor of our city, and the present and future happiness of so many wretched sufferers are so deeply interested.

JOHN B. SCOTT, *Sec'ry.*

REPORT.

The select committee, to whom was referred a communication from the directors of the New-York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, requesting aid from the Corporation, in behalf of said institution, beg leave to report, that they have given the subject all the attention which their time and capacity for investigating its merits would admit, and have no hesitation in saying, that if properly patronized, the Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb will become one of the most beneficial and useful establishments in this city.

For the purpose of ascertaining the practicability and method of instructing these interesting objects, the committee visited the school, in company with some of the directors, and were highly gratified at the progress of the scholars, as well as the emulation excited in them by their teacher, to excel each other in their studies. Judging from this exhibition of the talents displayed by the Deaf and Dumb, the committee are satisfied that they may not only be taught the rudiments of education, but with attention and perseverance, attain a knowledge of many of the higher branches of study.

The committee are unable to express the feelings of humanity and commiseration excited in them, on viewing the wretched condition of these sons and daughters of ignorance, and feel themselves bound by every consideration of propriety, to recommend their case to the humane consideration of the board, as one of peculiar interest, both as it respects the objects themselves, as well as the public at large.

The institution was incorporated by an act of the Legislature, on the 17th day of April, 1817, and has been in operation only five weeks. The school consists of eleven scholars:* three females, and eight males; who are taught reading, writing, and the art of conversing by signs; and an attempt, with some success, has been made, to instruct them to articulate words and short sentences. Only two of the scholars pay for their education; the friends and relations of the others being poor and unable to pay, they are taught gratis. The price of a quarter's schooling is fixed by the directors, for those who are able to pay, at ten dollars, including the necessary stationery, slates, &c. The annual expense of the present establishment, although very limited in its number, cannot be estimated at less than \$ 2500; for the payment of which, the directors have no other resource, except the voluntary donations of the charitable and benevolent. Frequent applications are made for admission in the school, by those whose circumstances will not permit them to pay the expense of tuition; but the finances of the institution are at so low an ebb, that it is impossible to admit more than the present number; and even they will be found too many, unless something is done to foster and protect them, until efficient aid can be obtained.

It has been ascertained that more than sixty of these unfortunate beings are now residents in this city, the greater part of whom, if left in their present ignorance, must sooner or later become chargeable on the public for their support. Under this consideration, is it not the interest of the Corporation to foster and encourage this institution, inasmuch as it will not only serve the

* The number has already increased to *eighteen*.

cause of humanity, but eventually prevent an increase of paupers, and an addition to the expenditure for their support?

The committee have no reason to doubt that a disposition exists in the board to assist, as far as propriety will warrant, so laudable an undertaking as the one under consideration. They, therefore, respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolutions :

Resolved, That the Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, be permitted to occupy, during the pleasure of this board, a ROOM in the third story of that part of the Old Alms-House reserved for the use of the Corporation, provided it is used for no other purpose, except for the instruction of the scholars.

Resolved, That the directors of said institution be authorized to receive in their school, ten Deaf and Dumb persons, at the expense of the Corporation, provided such persons are in needy circumstances, and unable to pay the expense of their instruction, and are inhabitants of this city, and that the expense of each scholar shall not exceed forty dollars a year.

Resolved, That a donation of \$ 500 be made to said institution, to aid them in carrying into effect this laudable undertaking, and that a warrant now pass for said amount.

Resolved, That the committee on this subject be entrusted with the execution of the foregoing resolutions.

STEPHEN ALLEN,

JOHN MORSS,

W. F. VAN AMRINGE.

NEW-YORK INSTITUTION
 FOR THE
 INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

At a meeting of the directors, held on the 16th day of July, 1818—

JAMES L. BELL, Esq. informed the board, that the Common Council of the city had granted the use of a chamber in the Institution, or building so denominated, for the better accommodation of the school; had made a donation of five hundred dollars, and had assumed the patronage of ten Deaf and Dumb youths of the city, to be received as pupils: Whereupon it was

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this board be returned to the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the city, for their liberality and munificence, in furthering the efforts making to rescue a valuable portion of our fellow creatures from ignorance and vice.

Ordered, That the President and Secretary, be a committee to convey the sense of this board, in the most respectful manner to the Common Council.

Extract from the Minutes,

JOHN B. SCOTT, Sec'y.

TERMS OF TUITION.

The School is superintended by the Reverend Mr. Stansbury. To his wife is committed the domestic department, so far as tends to promote the convenience and comfort of the boarders, who are students in the Institution. A committee of highly respectable ladies of the city, are appointed to visit the Institution, to suggest such regulations as may be proper in its domestic economy, with particular regard to the female scholars.

Board, per annum, including washing and
mending, - - - - - \$ 150
Tuition, including stationary, - - - - - 40

The branches of education are Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, &c. and Articulation, on the plan of the celebrated School of Dr. Watson, of England.

Those who are unable to pay for their education, will be taught gratis.

J. B. SCOTT, *Sec'ry.*



DIRECTORS

Of the New-York Institution for the Instruction of the DEAF and DUMB.

ELECTED 22d MAY, 1818.

SAMUEL L. MITCHILL, President.

JOHN B. ROMEYN, 1st. Vice President.

CADWALLADER D. COLDEN, 2d. do.

JOHN SLIDELL, Treasurer.

JOHN B. SCOTT, Secretary.

DE WITT CLINTON,

JOHN STANFORD,

SAMUEL AKERLY,

JAMES L. BELL,

COLLIN REED,

HENRY T. FELTUS,

PETER SHARPE,

WILLIAM L. ROSE,

PHILIP MILLEDOLER,

SILVANUS MILLER,

STEPHEN ALLEN,

ALEXANDER M'LEOD,

JONAS MAPES,

BISHOP CONNOLLY,

ELISHA W. KING,

VALENTINE MOTT,

CASPER W. EDDY,

GARRIT HYER,

JAMES PALMER,